

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Older people don't rate - major parties ignore one third of the electorate**

When older Australians attend their polling booths this Saturday they will be hard pressed to know who they should vote for, given their needs have been largely ignored by the major parties this election, says Australia's leading seniors' organization.

COTA Australia Chief Executive Ian Yates released an [election scorecard](#) today that portrays a sea of uncertainty and indifference about most of the issues of concern expressed by older Australians.

"In a tight election this is an amazing missed opportunity for the major parties and their candidates to have picked up the votes that could decide who forms government," Mr Yates said. "It's stunning that the party that really responded to older people's needs could have won a lot more votes, but didn't take up the opportunity.

"Despite people over 60 making up nearly a third of voters this election, their clearly expressed concerns have not been given priority by the major parties."

At the beginning of this election COTA surveyed over 1000 older people to ask what their biggest issues were for the election.

"Quality health care is the biggest concern for older Australians – very understandably, as they are the largest number of customers of the health system.

"Yet apart from a confusing slanging match about the Medicare payments system and increasingly narrow differences about who would reinstate what to longer term hospital funding, there has barely been a sensible commitment to improve the health system to better equip older people for active and healthier ageing.

"Focused services to support older people's mental health, and timely access to good oral health services for older Australians, stand out as key areas that should have had a specific focus, but have not attracted attention. It's as if older people's needs in these critical areas are invisible to politicians.

"Similarly, accessing quality aged care services when they are finally needed was another high priority concern; and an [Essential Research](#) survey found that 42 percent of voters would vote for a party that offered better aged care – amazingly none of them want to take up the offer!

"The major parties have refused to commit to abolishing the aged care rationing system that means waiting lists for older people needing care will continue to grow at an alarming rate.

"It's unacceptable that frail elderly people assessed by government as requiring care can't get it when its most needed. This can't continue and addressing this issue better be a priority for whoever wins government this weekend or we will pursue them on it over the next three years."

Mr Yates said other areas in which the major parties had not made major commitments were affordable housing, age discrimination and a comprehensive retirement incomes system.

"The next three years will require commitments by all parties much greater than their performance in this election if they want to ensure older people feel valued and their needs acknowledged - because at the moment they feel like they are being taken for granted."

COTA Australia's election scorecard can be found at:

[http://www.cota.org.au/australia/achieving/election2016/election\\_scorecard.aspx](http://www.cota.org.au/australia/achieving/election2016/election_scorecard.aspx)

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